

THE LOSS OF IDENTITY IN EMILY BRONTE'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* AND
K. S. MANIAM'S *THE RETURN* IN RELATION TO COMMUNICATION
ISSUES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

HAFUDH FARHOOD ABDA ALSALIM

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Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia

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To my mother, To the memory of my father, who would have been glad to see me at
this moment.

To my wife and beloved children, Saif, Mustafa, and my little queen Lilian, for their
love and support.

To my brothers and my sisters for their support and encouragement

To all my family members and friends for their love and support.



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ABSTRACT

The Post-world War II was the period of an act to ask for decolonisation and freedom of nations, which were hitherto under colonial rule. These communities wanted to move forward in the direction of reforming their social and individual identities. Therefore, the question of identity became one of the most critical issues in postcolonial literature as its crisis existed in all postcolonial communities. The purpose of this study is to explore the loss of identity that individual encounters during the process of searching for an identity. This is because lack of communication and physical mobility usually amplify the spiritual or psychological sense of alienation, leading to loss of identity. In this study, the researcher adopted the postcolonial criticism (Homi Bhabha's Ambivalence and Edward Said's Orientalism) and the psychoanalytic criticism (Freud's Defense Mechanisms and Kristeva's Abjection). This study analysed two postcolonial novels (Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and K.S Maniam's *The Return*) tracing the themes of loss of identity and the effect of communication in the role of the behaviour of the characters. The two novels were analysed in a systematic approach based on the principles of the qualitative research technique that was embraced in conducting the thematic analysis of the novels. The nature of the study was interpretative in terms of analysing the texts. The study clarified the influence of colonialism on identity, social, psychological, and political facets of colonised communities. As the coloniser imposed his language on the colonised, misunderstanding and lack of communication became part of the colonised's life. Therefore, the main reason behind the loss of identity in both novels was demonstrated through the lives of the two main characters (Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* and Ravi in *The Return*). The duo was slave and migrant who were exposed to new cultures. It was difficult for them to cope with the new cultures as communication challenges set in amidst the quest for their own identities. The psychological trauma experienced by the characters showed the crisis of identity the colonised communities suffered from. This study is regarded as the

first approach grouping these two novels to be studied together as postcolonial novels from two viewpoints: the coloniser and the colonised to show the crisis of identity. Besides, a new psychological theory (Kristeva's Abjection) was applied to examine the psychological impacts of colonialism on the colonised. Lastly, the study demonstrated the consequences of random migration on people. Thus, it is a call to mitigate the migration of young people from Iraq to foreign countries.



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ABSTRAK

Pasca Perang Dunia Kedua merupakan era dekolonisasi dan pembebasan bangsa daripada pemerintahan kolonial. Komuniti pascakolonial ini ingin berubah ke arah pembaharuan identiti sosial dan individu. Sehubungan itu, persoalan identiti menjadi isu yang kritikal dalam kesusasteraan pascakolonial kerana isu ini wujud di semua komuniti pascakolonial. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan untuk meneroka kehilangan identiti yang dialami oleh individu semasa proses mencari identiti. Ini kerana keterbatasan dalam komunikasi dan mobiliti fizikal biasanya meningkatkan rasa keterasingan rohani atau psikologi yang menyebabkan kehilangan identiti. Dalam kajian ini, penyelidik mengadaptasi kritikan pascakolonial (*Homi Bhabha's Ambivalence* dan *Edward Said's Orientalism*) dan kritikan psikoanalitik (*Freud's Defense Mechanisms* dan *Kristeva's Abjection*). Dua buah novel pascakolonial (*Wuthering Heights* oleh Emily Bronte dan *The Return* oleh K.S Maniam) dianalisis secara tematik bagi mengesan tema kehilangan identiti dan pengaruh komunikasi dalam tingkah laku watak. Penganalisaan teks menjadikan kajian ini bersifat interpretasi. Kajian ini menjelaskan pengaruh kolonial terhadap identiti, sosial, psikologi dan politik masyarakat yang dijajah. Kesalahfahaman dan keterbatasan komunikasi dalam kalangan komuniti yang dijajah telah menjadi kebiasaan dalam kehidupan komuniti pascakolonial. Watak Heathcliff dalam novel *Wuthering Heights* dan Ravi dalam novel *The Return* menggambarkan kehidupan golongan hamba dan pendatang yang terdedah kepada budaya baru. Keterbatasan berkomunikasi menyukarkan mereka untuk mengadaptasi budaya baru dan menjadi penyebab kepada krisis identiti. Trauma psikologi yang dialami oleh watak menunjukkan krisis identiti yang dialami oleh komuniti pascakolonial. Kajian ini merupakan pendekatan pertama yang mengkaji krisis identiti komuniti pascakolonial dari perspektif penjajah dan komuniti yang dijajah dengan menyatukan dua novel pascakolonial. Di samping itu, teori psikologi baru (*Kristeva's Abjection*) digunakan untuk menjelaskan kesan kolonialisme terhadap psikologi komuniti yang dijajah. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini

memberikan gambaran kesan penghijrahan terhadap individu. Secara tidak langsung, kajian ini merupakan mesej kepada golongan muda Iraq untuk mengurangkan penghijrahan ke negara asing.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Postcolonial literary writings portrayed a significant phase of the colonised communities' lives. Such writings provided relevant examples of those communities' cultural, social, and political status. Many writers from developing countries demonstrate their creativity and success in focusing on these communities and their suffering (Shands, 2008). Their fictional characters were designed to refer to the real characters which were profoundly and directly affected by the colonialist activities. They adopted ideologies and hybrid cultures, which were strange to their moral and social backgrounds (Little, McGivern & Kerins, 2016). It was observed that their attitudes towards that alien culture and the colonisers' pursuits are either demonstrated by the complete identification of the new culture or rejected altogether. The colonisers introduced ideal stereotyped images that remain on the ways of thinking of these cultures as dominant and principal pictures.

The quest for identity is regarded as one of the most important subjects in the modern world because of its effects on postcolonial communities (Dizayi, 2015). The identity crisis became the focus of many studies due to some reasons such as; the conditions of the postcolonial period, the way the newly freed countries lived, and their quest for their own identity. All these factors made the subject of identity more important than some other field in the colonised communities' lives. Said (1999b) stated that:

Identity—who we are, where we come from, what we are—is difficult to maintain in exile...we are the _other_, an opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement, an exodus. Silence and discretion veil the hurt, slow the body searches, soothe the sting of loss: (16–17).

This shift in the colonised communities' lives made the postcolonial novel deviate from the traditional novel style and theme to issues concerning individuals, peoples, and societies of the time. From the psychological point of view, many novels concentrated on the effects of the activities of the coloniser on the colonised because colonialism does not end with the end of the colonial occupation. Hence, the two terms; double consciousness and hybridity can best describe the effect of colonisation on those colonised people (Baker, 2006).

In both novels, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Return*, the writers K. S. Maniam and Emily Bronte respectively explored the issue of identity implying that physical mobility of the individual from one nation or culture to another could cause feelings like unhomeliness, loneliness, isolation, and some other psychological problems. This is because the individual will face the challenges required to cope with the new social and cultural factors. The effect may be the alienation of the individual from others.

On the one hand, Bronte clearly portrays the issue of identity in her novel *Wuthering Heights* through the character of the protagonist Heathcliff. He was brought as a child from one of Liverpool slums to live with a new family (Von Sneidern, 1995). He faced a lot of difficulties to be a member of this family. Also, he was treated unfairly and he could not feel that he belongs to this place. He lost his identity and he seeks revenge as an attempt to find his own identity.

Apparently, K. S. Maniam's experience and opinion of nation and identity are a bit more serious than that of Emily Bronte. As Maniam stated that, -no nation can truly exist unless the individual asked how far has he made the country in which he has lived for so long a country in his soul? (Wilson, 1993: 23). Maniam, the Malaysian-Indian writer characterizes the crisis of identity through the narrative actions that can be seen in the eyes of Ravi, the Malaysian-born boy, who is divided in living between traditional Indian religious beliefs and British colonial pressures on Malaysian land. Albeit, his attempt to locate himself among all these diversified cultures and achieve his need for connection and identity became a challenge to

contend with. Through Ravi, the main character, we can see some psychological complexities that were faced by individuals in their journey to justify their existence in the surroundings where they are currently relocated.

The researcher has selected these novels according to specific criteria: first, these novels are considered as postcolonial texts because they both show some aspects of the colonised communities' lives and the difficulties the colonised were exposed to. Secondly, the two novels share some themes such as loss of identity in relation to communication, exile, and the diaspora. Thirdly, the two selected texts were chosen to explore the theme of loss of identity in relation to lack of communication from two different perspectives and viewpoints of the coloniser's and the colonised's. As Emily Bronte is an English writer, she conveys the coloniser's viewpoint through her text *Wuthering Heights*. While K. S. Maniam is a Malaysian-Indian writer, who clearly presents the colonised's viewpoint concerning the matter of identity in postcolonial time.

1.1.1 Synopsis to Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights (1847), the only novel written by Emily Bronte, is one of the canonical English novels. Emily Bronte was the greatest writer among the three sisters in the Brontes family (Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, and Anne Bronte). The three sisters wrote many books and poetry (Gezari, 1999).

Wuthering Heights tells the story of Heathcliff, a young black boy, who was brought from Liverpool to London by Mr. Earnshaw. Mr. Earnshaw had two children, Hindley and Catherine. When Heathcliff joined their family, he became a close friend to Catherine while Hindley became very jealous of Heathcliff because of his father's love for Heathcliff. Therefore, Heathcliff's childhood was hard and he lived a very miserable life (Von Sneidern, 1995). After Mr. Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff's life became worse. Then, Hindley controlled everyone in *Wuthering Heights*. He maltreated Heathcliff and degraded him to be a servant and to live out of *Wuthering Heights* in the horses' place. As he grew up, Heathcliff felt that he was more oppressed by Hindley and his existence was threatened by him. However, the only thing, among these miseries, that helped Heathcliff to survive was Catherine's love for him. Therefore, when Hindley noticed the connection between the two, he made efforts to interrupt that by encouraging the relationship between Catherine and

Edgar Linton. The Linton family was a very wealthy family. They lived in Thrushcross Grange which was close to Wuthering Heights. They were neighbours.

After a short time of exchanging visits between the two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, Catherine started liking Edgar. Once, Catherine asked Nelly's advice concerning Edgar's proposal for marriage. Catherine accepted his proposal, but at the same time, she still loves Heathcliff. She talked about social status and how she found Edgar suits her socially more than Heathcliff (Uddin and Ullah, 2011). Unfortunately, Heathcliff overheard this part of the conversation and did not hear the rest of it, when she added that she loved Heathcliff more than anyone else and she will do that to secure Heathcliff's future. After he heard this talk, Heathcliff decided to leave Wuthering Heights and to disappear.

After three years, Heathcliff came back rich and good looking gentleman which shocked the residents of both the Heights and Thrushcross Grange. He decided to pay it back to those who mistreated him earlier and made up his mind to get revenge from all of them. He succeeded to strip Hindley out of his money by gambling to own the Wuthering Heights later on (Rinna, Nugroho, & dewi Chandraningrum, 2018). He also succeeded to take the Thrushcross Grange after Edgar's death. But with all of that, and because of the mistreatment at Hindley's hand and Catherine's betrayal, Heathcliff suffered from psychological problems and anxiety that led to his destruction and death by committing suicide at the end.

1.1.2 Synopsis to K. S. Maniam's *The Return*

K.S. Maniam's *The Return* is one of the postcolonial novels. It is considered as an autobiographical novel (Dhanapal, 2014). The novel centred on a story of an Indian boy's journey of self-discovery. Ravi was an Indian boy who grew up on Malaysia soil. The novel equally covered the education journey of this young boy, including the sorrows and the deceptions that he passed through in his life. In addition, the novel tells more about the traditions, the difficulties, and the lifestyle of the community of Indian immigrants (Zabihzadeh, 2017).

The novel opens with the big mother's tale, Periathai, to tell about her struggles in the new land, Malaysia. Periathai came to this country with her three young boys where she worked as a tinker, healer, and then in cultivation. She farmed the land and then she believed that she owns the land (Jeyathurai, 2009). The

narration about Periathai's journey and the way she struggled to drive her own stake in a foreign country was very emotional. Even the house she lived in was threatened with destruction from time to time. She died without owning that land.

Then, the story moved to tell about Ravi, the narrator, who told more about his grandmother's struggle in life. After that, Ravi told about his family and his own life at 'the longhouse', as he called, at the hospital compound.

As Ravi represents the first generation of Hindu who was born in Malaysia, he has several queries regarding his identity and nationality. He was stranded between his origin and his being now and this crisis is worsened when he tried to assimilate the English language and culture. He states that -How does one describe the land one live in but never saw? (Maniam, 2001: 14).

Ravi was more influenced by colonial rule and he gradually moved apart from his family and his community as a whole. Ravi thought that the new culture was more satisfying and rewarding than his own culture. Through learning English and English education, he tried to assimilate to another culture. There were some causes that encouraged Ravi to alienate himself from his family traditions. Firstly, he tried to gain knowledge to get more chances which may help him to obtain different social status. Secondly, he was influenced by the books and the stories he read at school. He found that those stories and colonial mythology can transport him into a world of his dreams. Therefore, education helped him to enter the world of fairy tales and it provided him with the needed knowledge.

C. W. Watson (2001) in his introduction part of *The Return* mentioned that the novel did not focus only on the narrator, Ravi, but also it focused on the description of place, time, and people. There are three kinds of return that the novel presents:

- 1) the return to Malaysia when the narrator came back home after spending a few years in overseas- England,
- 2) the return to the childhood experience of the autobiographer that he recreates in the narration, and
- 3) the return which was considered as a gift that the son has done as compensation to the failure and the disappointment that the family faced along the way. He did so by publishing the novel and presenting the same to the family as a record to their suffering.

1.2 Problem statement

The postcolonial period was filled with ideological confusion of events at both individual and community levels. The effect of colonisation was negative in many aspects. The people of the colonised communities were left in disorder because the colonisers forced many of them out of their countries after the violent revolutions against the coloniser. The result of this political and legal emptiness brought all types of conflict and chaos (Kenalemang, 2013). As a result of this, the people of these communities neglected their cultural, social, and traditional education inheritances. In return, they started seeking their identity formation.

Studies like Sheoran (2014) and Dizayi (2015) had explored the numerous ways in which identity was constructed in postcolonial time. This study aims to explore the issue of loss of identity in relation to communication. Through the process of searching for an identity, individuals encounter loss of identity due to lack of communication and physical mobility. Both issues resulted in rising of the spiritual sense of alienation, which leads to loss of identity at the end. This could be done by applying some new psychological theories to the selected works. The two psychological theories are Freud's psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms and Kristeva's theory of abjection.

The researcher found that less attention has been paid to study K. S. Maniam's *The Return* psychologically in comparison with Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. To the researcher's point of view, *The Return* is loaded with a lot of psychological elements which have been left unexplored for sometimes, especially the application of Freud's and Kristeva's theories. Thus, studies in which any of these two psychological theories were applied to K. S. Maniam's *The Return* were scanty in the literature. However, there were some studies that treated Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* psychoanalytically. Still, they lack the content comparative analysis of Sigmund Freud's and Julia Kristeva's theories. These theories were employed to study the two protagonists' characters to explore the reasons behind the loss of their identities.

As in the case of both main characters; Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* and Ravi in *The Return* who were self-alienated, both were not deeply rooted to the community that they lived in. This was observed through their detachment to that new community since they were from different cultural backgrounds. Hence, both

writers, through their writings, tried to portray the immigrants' hardship in adapting to the new culture and society. Therefore, this study is concerned about unearthing the reasons behind loss of identity, the impact of communication, and the implications of lack of communication in relation to identity.

After World War II, colonised communities started seeking their own identity as they started enjoying freedom from the coloniser. They all move in the direction of identity formation, but such a move was not easy because the coloniser left these communities live in a state of chaos. They almost lost their culture and their language because of the hybridity and imposition of ideologies with the coloniser's culture and language. In addition, the forceful migration of the colonised was revoked as they were to leave their countries (Dizayi, 2015). That migration caused a psychological struggle, which led to the loss of identity that can be shown in the selected novels. For instance, the lives of the two main characters, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* and Ravi, in *The Return* as a slave and a migrant were characterized by challenges. The duo was moved to new cultures that they found difficulties to communicate and to cope with the people there, besides, the hardships they encountered during the search for their own identities.

The interaction and communication process helps individuals to grasp the nature of the universe and its place within this world around them. Both verbal and nonverbal experiences help to present and to construct self (Goffman, 1959; Tawfiq & Ogle, 2013). The theory of symbolic interaction is concerned with the creation of self and society, based on interactions between individuals. Stone (1962) asserted that –a primary tenet of symbolic interaction theory holds that the self is established, maintained, and altered in and through communication (p. 86). People develop and grow through interaction and communication with others. The social norms are made clear through these exchanges to understand when individual actions align specifically or do not align with certain behaviours. The lack of communication and interaction between individuals causes a sense of isolation that affected the development of their identities. The way the coloniser treated the colonised as the 'Other', and how the coloniser imposed his language at the expense of the native language of the colonised, created hardships and misunderstanding which became part of the life of the colonised. In a way or another, it negatively affects his/her own identity formation process.

Thus, the researcher illustrates that this study can provide some insights into future researches concerning the identity dilemma in postcolonial time. The study examines two of the postcolonial novels, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and K.S. Maniam's *The Return*, by applying some postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories to reveal the reasons behind the loss of identity of the two main characters in the selected novels by shedding lights on migration and difficulty in communication as main reasons.

Out of the 51 studies presented in the literature review, it was clear that these studies are distributed as follows: 10 studies focused on identity construction in postcolonial time. One of those studies was about K.S Maniam, one was about Emily Bronte, and the remaining 8 studies were generic in approach.

Also, there are 7 studies about exile; three were about K.S Maniam's work, one was about Emily Bronte's work, and remaining three were general. There are four studies on hybridity, one was about K.S Maniam's work and three are general.



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Table 1.1: Relevant studies conducted on the two novels selected for the current study

Theories	Studies	Themes				General studies	Grouping Studies on both writers
			Studies	Studies on K.S. Maniam	Studies on Emily Bronte		
Postcolonial Theory	41					13	
	Sultan (2015)	1- Identity	10	1	1	8	
	Spivak (1999)	2- communication	3		1	2	
	Ashcroft (2003)	3- Exile		3	1	3	
	Sheoran (2014)	4- Hybridity	7				
	Shome and Hegde (2002)	5- Diaspora	4	1		3	
	Jetten (2017)		4	1		3	
	Haslam (2014)						
Psychoanalytical Theory	13			1	4	7	
	Asl (2014)	1- cultural identity and communication	1	1			
	Vaillant (1992)						
	Cramer (2015)						

In the case of diaspora, four studies were presented. One was about K.S Maniam's work and three are general. One study was about the effect of lack of communication, which was considered as one of the problems that the colonised communities have suffered from. The scanty nature of studies about the loss of identity in relation to communication issues about any of the selected novels *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and *The Return* by K.S Maniam showed that there are knowledge gaps. Hence, the need for the current study is to bridge the gap.

In comparison with Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, not as much of attention has been paid to study K. S. Maniam's *The Return* psychologically. The application of Freud's and Kristeva's theories to this novel is scarce in the literature. However, there are some studies that treat Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* psychoanalytically. Still, they lack the conflation of Sigmund Freud's and Julia Kristeva's theories which are employed to study the two protagonists' characters to explore the reasons behind the loss of their identities, which is part of the gap of this study. Thus, the current study employed Freud's psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms and Kristeva's abjection as concepts to examine the matters of searching for the self and constructing identity.

1.3 Research objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To examine the crisis of identity in postcolonial literature focusing on British literature (Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*) and Malaysian English literature (K. S. Maniam's *The Return*).
- 2) To examine the communication process among the characters, which may lead to the loss of identity of some characters who felt alienated from others.
- 3) To explore the main characters' dilemma in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and K.S. Maniam's *The Return* in relation to the two psychological theories concerning identity, which are Freud's Defense Mechanisms theory and Kristeva's Abjection.
- 4) To explore the main characters in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and K.S. Maniam's *The Return* in relation to communication and interaction with the society they live in.

1.4 Research questions

The research was planned to answer the questions below:

- 1) How is the crisis of identity depicted in postcolonial literature, specifically in British literature and Malaysian English literature?
- 2) What impact does communication have on the loss of identity among the characters in the selected novels?
- 3) How do the selected psychological theories explore the two main characters in the journey of identity search?
- 4) To what extent, does communication cause an inner conflict, isolation, and loneliness among the characters in the selected novels?

1.5 Scope of study

This study is conducted to examine only two novels: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and *The Return* by K.S. Maniam. The study is ascribed to the nature of the methodology and the study theories. The field of postcolonial literature was explored from a different perspective to shed light on one of the main issues of the postcolonial time. Efforts were made to appraise identity formation and the hardships that accompany this process as well as issues related to the communication. These novels were analysed from the perspectives of postcolonial and psychoanalytical theories.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant since, on the literary level, it presented a new grouping study in which two selected texts were used to explore the loss of identity and the impact of lack of communication on the field through the selected novels. Besides, how the two protagonists, Heathcliff and Ravi, lost their identities because of their mobility from one nation to another and because of the new changes they encounter in the new cultures. Also, this study is relevant in identifying the effect of colonisation on the colonised countries, as the two novels in this study were carefully chosen. Hence, one novel represents the coloniser and the other represents the colonised.

On the psychological level, in this study, two different theories were applied to study the selected novels as an innovative approach from previous studies. The psychological theories that are used to analyse the texts are Freud's Defense Mechanisms theory and Kristeva's Abjection theory which is applied for the first time on the selected texts.

On the social side, this study could be used as a lesson or a call to demotivate migration from Iraq to Europe and some other countries. Many people were migrating from Iraq lately. Their thinking was that they can cope and be happy in another country with a totally different culture. However, the result will be just like that of Heathcliff and Ravi. They find themselves alienated, unhomed and suffering psychologically. Many of them become addicted to drugs and some committed suicide. The current study suggests relevant options to help in solving part of this problem by exploring the risks of such random migration and its negative consequences on the individuals and their families too.

1.7 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework outlines the key variables involved in analysis, whether graphically or narratively (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interaction of these constructs is also defined. The following diagram highlights the conceptual framework of the current study. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth insight into one of the dominant issues of the postcolonial era and the modern world as well. It is the matter of identity loss and the role of communication in this respect in two postcolonial novels Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and K. S. Maniam's *The Return*.

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